

Notes
TLNA Steering Committee Meeting for
McGrath Property Group Proposal for the 1200 N Block of E. Washington
Feb. 19, 2015

Introductions --

Patrick Heck, TLNA Development Chair

Tim Parks (City Planning)

Lance McGrath and Tim Metzler (McGrath Property Group)

Steering Committee: Patty Prime (TLNA President), Karla Handel, Rebecca Cuningham, Evan Wedell, Richard Linster, Ryan McCormick, Jeff Reinke, Karen Banaszak, Robert Lasseter

Lance McGrath presented the revised proposal with a 3-story building and no Quonset hut. This was also presented on Feb. 12 at the TLNA monthly meeting. See the meeting minutes and presented slides for that TLNA monthly meeting on the TLNA development website:

<http://www.danenet.org/tlna/development.html>

Discussion:

Richard Linster asked Lance how they addressed the concerns from UDC and the neighbors. The 4th floor from the previous proposal version was the biggest issue then, said Lance. Richard said that density concerns remain and the neighborhood letter to Lance was not responded to.

Lance said that the dropping of the commercial/retail space to grade level in front is the biggest change in this version, beyond the removal of the 4th floor. They are still playing around with the unit mix – they may include a couple of 4 bedroom units, but are not committed to that. There may be 1 4-bdrm unit.

Rebecca Cuningham asked for a clarification on the unit mix. Lance said that in this configuration, 20-25% of units will be 2-bdrm or larger, but it is still changing.

Jeff Reinke asked if there could be an owner-occupied component. Lance responded that due to financing it is not possible. It doesn't fit with their goals, but they are in it for the long-term; they don't plan to sell the building.

Patty Prime asked if the variation in the façade with flat brick sections and inset balconies will continue on the E. Mifflin side. Lance said yes. Patty also asked about why they bumped out the lower 2 floors on the rear. Lance said that replacing the square footage lost by the removal of the 4th floor made adding that section necessary.

Patrick Heck asked about the building height. Lance said it is 39' exactly, which doesn't include the parapet, but does meet UDD-8 regulations.

Robert Lasseter asked about their HVAC system and placement of any outdoor HVAC components. Lance said the a/c condensers will be in the center on the roof, away from the building outside edge. There will also be solar panels in the middle, providing electricity to the

common areas. Otherwise, HVAC units will be in the units – typical split system, forced air, gas heat with a/c condensers on the rooftop.

Jeff Reinke discussed the potential for traffic problems on Curtis Court and E. Mifflin. Lance said they still needed to deal with the potential problem of exiting cars' headlights shining on the home across N. Few. Installing shrubbery at that home is a possibility and Lance will pay for that. Jeff asked about the possibility of putting a traffic barrier on Curtis Court. Lance said that the City has to drive that decision, but they are willing to put language in their leases that forbids driving on Curtis Court. Jeff reminds all that they live across from the Avenue Bar parking lot, which has a sign saying no exit, but they use it anyway. Jeff thinks a cut-through on East Washington would help, but Tim Parks says that is not likely. Tim also thinks that it will be difficult to predict the traffic impacts and that city action will likely have to wait until the impacts are seen, i.e., after the tenants move in. Any turn lanes, speed bumps, etc., would be part of the capitol budget. Patty asked if neighbors could band together and talk to Ledell about making such a request. Tim said they could, but budgetary requests are often made without aldermanic support too. Patrick Heck asked for a rough estimate of installing a left turn lane from eastbound E. Washington onto Few. Tim says a very rough guess of \$30k - Lance indicates he's willing to underwrite that.

Patty mentioned that there was a traffic problem on Monroe when Gates & Brovi opened. Tim Parks said that there initially were a lot of patrons from outside the neighborhood and lots of cars, but that surge has gone down. It took a year before things settled out and neighborhood seems to be okay with the situation. It can take a while before the city will act since they like to wait to see what the longterm situation will be.

Ryan McCormick, who lives on the 1200 E. Mifflin, says he was very excited initially by the project. He believes most traffic will probably go towards downtown/Epic in the morning, but some people will need to go east on E. Washington; people are going to take E. Mifflin to Baldwin St., adding to the existing traffic problems on E. Mifflin.

Evan Wedell mentions that the traffic will also depend on the retail space needs – where will those customers park? Lance says most can park on E. Washington because that parking area will expand when existing driveways disappear. Employees will also be able to use the parking level during the day when tenants are at work. Lance mentioned that the commercial/retail space could still get bigger by 50%, but that is TBD. Patty said that John Feith wants more commercial space per city requirements. Lance says that they lose parking spots if they make it bigger.

Karla Handell says that she finds the building uninspired and not attractive. She likes the colors, but doesn't like the inlet balconies. She is annoyed that there is no green space beyond code requirements. She wants to know what they are offering the neighbors. What is the benefit? Lance says architecture is a matter of taste, but the green space amount does comply with code. He says that he hopes they will give the design some time to further mature. He mentions that the buffer in the back is bigger than required. Karla asks about the rear 2-story portion. Lance reiterates that it is a matter of balancing the loss of square footage from the 4th floor's removal. He says that if he were to building single-family homes on the property, they could be much closer to the property lines – 8' from the edge.

Jeff says he prefers the density in the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan, 41-60 units per acre, as opposed to the 70-80 on this one-acre site. Lance says that the density is still TBD, but it

will likely be 70-80, depending on the unit mix.

Karen Banaszak asks how long Lance expects the building to last. Lance says that with maintenance it should last 100 years. Karen said that UW's new Gordon Commons has a lifespan of 60 years.

Ryan asks if Lance is purchasing the adjacent fire maintenance facility. Lance answers that he is not purchasing it, but would like to if/when it becomes available. Tim says that typically available city property is first offered to other city departments before it is sold.

A discussion of the density ensued. Tim Parks reminded all that the density is fungible. It is not necessarily the best way to judge the appropriateness of a building. Unit mix and building mass are usually better measures.

A discussion of the commercial/ retail space issues – Tim mentions that there has to be a market for the space to succeed. If in the future, all nearby developments start competing for commercial/retail business, there could be empty storefronts where apartment units could have been. The City has been reducing the emphasis on mixed-use that was so important in the new zoning code. Instead they are emphasizing that commercial space has to be viable.

Karen says that community space builds community – she wants a community room so that the tenants will have a space to build their own sense of community and perhaps even interact with the neighbors. Lance says he will look at the possibility, but it currently is not in there.

The Committee then lists the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the current proposal that will be included in a new Steering Committee report. The new report will address only the new proposal, not the past 4-story proposal. Patrick Heck agrees to draft the new report and send to the Committee for comments. See that report on the TLNA website for the list of favorable and unfavorable items and the end result.